DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 145 583 EA 010 052

AUTHOR	Price, Nelson C.
TITLE	School Community Councils and Advisory Boards: A Notebook for Administrators. Why? Who? What? When? How? Operations Notebook 18.
INSTITUTION	Association of California School Administrators.
PUB DATE	Jul 77
NOTE	49p.; Originally compiled for and published by San Mateo County Office of Education
AVAILABLE FROM	Association of California School Administrators, 1575 Old Bayshore Highway, Burlingame, California 94010 ($2.00 for ACSA members; $4.00 non-members)
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.83 HC-$2.06 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Administrative Personnel; *Advisory Committees; Educational Policy; Elementary Secondary Education; *Instructional Materials; Parent Participation; Questionnaires; School Community Cooperation; *School Community Relationship

ABSTRACT

This notebook contains three types of materials: information useful to administrators who work with school community councils, exercises providing practice on some of the skills needed to work with school community councils, and sample forms and other materials helpful in working with school community councils. Areas of concern include the benefits and pitfalls of school community councils, the selection of an advisory committee, the functions of a council, the development of written policies and procedures, and the evaluation of the work of the council. (Author/IRT)

****
* Documents acquired by ERIC include many informal unpublished *
* materials not available from other sources. ERIC makes every effort *
* to obtain the best copy available. Nevertheless, items of marginal *
* reproducibility are often encountered and this affects the quality *
* of the microfiche and hardcopy reproductions ERIC makes available *
* via the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS). EDRS is not *
* responsible for the quality of the original document. Reproductions *
* supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made from the original. *
****

ED145583

ACSA OPERATIONS NOTEBOOK 18

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

ACSA

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC) AND USERS OF THE ERIC SYSTEM."

School Community Councils and Advisory Boards: A NOTEBOOK FOR ADMINISTRATORS

WHY? · WHO? · WHAT? WHEN? · HOW?

EA 010 052

ASSOCIATION OF CALIFORNIA SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS, JULY 1977

The Association of California School Administrators

Position Statement . . .

ACSA believes in the value of all school related groups; assisting in the formulation of goals, objectives, and processes for determining a local school's programs. We believe guidelines for such groups should be established by the local boards of education and that these guidelines should maintain the advisory nature of that input; reserving the policy function for the Board of Education and the implementation function to the administrative personnel.

OPERATIONS NOTEBOOKS - ($2.00, members; $4.00, non-members)

No. 1 - Non-Rehiring of Certificated Employees Under Education Code 13447
No. 3 - Planning for Declining Enrollment
No. 5 - The School Administrator's Publicity Handbook
No. 8 - Time Management
No. 10 - Leadership Team
No. 12 - Evaluation, Reassignment and Legal Rights of School Administrators
No. 13 - Strategies for Administrative Staff Development
No. 14 - Performance Evaluation & Appraisal of Certificated Staff
No. 15 - Year Round Education
No. 16 - Working With Advisory Committees
No. 17 - Discipline...Number One Problem in the Schools?

Binder for "Operations Notebooks" - red printed in gold with title & logo - $2.00 ea.

USING THIS NOTEBOOK

This notebook contains three types of materials:

Information useful to administrators who work with school community councils.

Exercises providing practice on some of the skills needed to work with school community councils.

Sample forms and other materials helpful in working with school community councils.

Ideally, the monograph should be used in conjunction with a one-day workshop. This approach is recommended; skilled personnel from the Educational Support and Planning Division of the San Mateo County Office of Education can be provided as workshop leaders. The booklet can also be used as a reference source independent of the workshop.

Several inservice training workshops can also supplement the material contained herein. These include ACSA Project Leadership sessions on participative management, shared decision-making, advisory committees and problem-solving. For further information, contact Project Leadership (213) 868-0846 or (714) 994-0870.

The San Mateo County Office of Education offers as a part of its management workshop series special sessions on school level project planning, group skills and effective meetings, school management and community councils, and decision-making. For further information on these, call the San Mateo County Office of Education (415) 364-5600, ext. 2474.

On the next page is an outline of what this notebook covers.

Originally compiled for and published by San Mateo County Office of Education, J. Russell Kent, Superintendent.

Written and compiled by:
Nelson C. Price
Director, Planning and Evaluation
San Mateo County Office of Education
333 Main Street
Redwood City, California 94063

Adapted for ACSA by:
James L. Olivero
ACSA staff

1977

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Pages
Introduction to School Community Councils	1
Benefits and Pitfalls of a School Community Council	4
Community Involvement: How Do You Get It?	8
Selecting a School Community Council	12
Functions of a School Community Council	16
Who Should be Responsible for What?	19
Developing Written Policies and Procedures	25
Considerations for Writing Bylaws	27
Assessing the Training Needs of the School Community Council	29
Maintaining Interest	32
Evaluating the Work of the Council	33

EXERCISES

Exercise #1	Benefits and Problems of the School Community Council	3
Exercise #2	Role Playing: Increasing Community Involvement	7
Exercise #3	Selecting a School Community Council	11
Exercise #4	Functions of the School Community Council	15
Exercise #5	Who Should be Responsible for What?	20
Exercise #6	Developing Written Policies and Procedures	25

APPENDICES

Appendix A	Proposed Bylaws	37
Appendix B	Objectives of Public Involvement	41

INTRODUCTION

The lack of effective parental involvement on advisory boards is largely attributable to the inability of school administration at all levels to communicate the relevance and importance of the advisory boards to the parent. This lack of communication is evident after reviewing and analyzing key questions on parent surveys from schools. The conclusions reached from these surveys are:

1. Parents lack the necessary knowledge to fully participate in the planning, implementation and evaluation of school programs.

2. Where a limited number of parents have the necessary knowledge, they lack the vehicle to disseminate that knowledge.

Mario Rocha

"Involvement" has become almost a by-word in schools. Many categorical aid funding sources mandate school community councils, state laws are increasingly requiring it, and more and more school administrators support the concept.[1/] Some progress has been made, involving citizens, students, and staff in planning, advising and/or decision-making. Much, however, remains to be done. Conditions promoting participation and involvement include:

- A sincere willingness on the part of the staff and the community to work cooperatively.
- The formal adoption of enabling policies and procedures.
- An organizational structure permitting involvement.
- The desire, ability, and opportunity to develop necessary knowledge, skills, and attitudes for effective involvement.

In this notebook, the term School Community Council is used to encompass "Advisory Committee," "Community School Council," and other similar titles. The material applies equally to similar bodies whether their authority is advisory or decision-making.

Several good manuals on this topic already exist; these have been drawn from heavily. Whole pages and paragraphs have been borrowed intact, with only transition paragraphs added and an occasional word deleted or added.

1/ Andrus, Floyd W. and Ovard, Glen F., "Administrators Attitudes Toward Community Involvement in California Schools, Kindergarten through Twelfth Grade," ACSA Region III Research Project 1975-76. Available from authors: Folsom-Cordova Unified School District, 1091 Colma St., Folsom, California 95630.

Page numbers cited below refer to pages in this document rather than those in the original source. The sources are listed and reproduced here with permission. The cooperation of these other agencies and authors is greatly appreciated. Brief excerpts in the text are credited in footnotes.

Functions of School Community Councils, Rowland Unified School District, Rowland Heights, California, pp. 4-5.

James C. Cox, "Functions and Responsibilities of Community Advisory Councils," Center for Community Education, Gallaudet College, Washington, D.C. Reprinted in "People Helping People," Office of the Los Angeles County Superintendent of Schools, pp. 16-19.

Wayne R. Robbins, Considerations for Writing Bylaws, San Diego Center for Community Education, San Diego County Department of Education, San Diego, California, pp. 27-28.

Wayne R. Robbins and Donald Whitaker, A Guide for Community School Advisory Councils, San Diego Center for Community Education, Department of Education, San Diego County, April, 1975, pp. 5-6, 12-13, 32-33.

Nelson C. Price, The Citizen Advisory Committee, the School Board, and Program Evaluation, California Evaluation Improvement Project, March, 1976, pp. 19-22.

Douglas T. Dunn, Community Guide, Numbers 6 & 7. Distributed by the Center for Community Education, Office of the Los Angeles County Superintendent of Schools, July, 1974, pp. 8-10.

Corey A. Stanley, School Advisory Committees, Cupertino School District, Cupertino, California, October, 1971, pp. 26-27.

Bobbie P. Batchelder and Peter Burchyns, Advisory Committee Handbook, funded by an ESEA Title I grant, California State Department of Education, and published by the San Mateo County Office of Education, 1976, pp. 29-30, 33-36.

Mario Rocha, Community Awareness Education Project, 3032 E. Belmont Avenue, Fresno, California, Pages 1, 13, 31, 33.

Additionally, the ACSA publication Operations Notebook #17, Working With Advisory Councils (available from ACSA) - written by James L. Olivero, offers specific skills for those who work with or on advisory councils.

EXERCISE #1

BENEFITS AND PROBLEMS OF THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Participants sit around tables in groups of four to six. Each group is given two large sheets of paper and a felt pen; or two blank transparencies and a pen.

Each group lists on one sheet the potential benefits of a school community council. On the other sheet list the disadvantages or potential problems.

When completed, results are displayed and discussed. The groups have about 15 minutes to record ideas.

BENEFITS AND PITFALLS OF A SCHOOL COMMUNITY COUNCIL

"You can't buy what a volunteer gives..."
James E. Allen, Jr., former United States
Commissioner of Education

The benefit of any educational effort must ultimately accrue to the learner. The benefits of a school community council can accrue to the learner as well as teachers, administrators, council members, parents, school board members, and the general community. Let's look at these benefits more closely.

LEARNER BENEFITS: Expanded and improved options, increased relevance, increased recognition, safety, and service.

- A school community council can aid in expanding and improving the options available to the learner.
- Community needs and desires are sensed by a council via surveys and personal contacts.
- Needs for classes in adult basic education are met.
- Desires for expanded offerings in art in the elementary school are satisfied.
- Opportunities for community-wide physical recreation are provided in the evenings.
- Needs for vocational and technical education are sensed.

The relevance of courses is greatly enriched via the involvement of community councils. Granted, the content of most of the academic elementary and high school courses are specified to considerable extent. The content of extramural, occupational, and adult courses, however, can be enhanced by a special sub-committee working in cooperation with the class instructor.

Recognition of outstanding learner performance is another benefit. Community councils recognize benefits through presentations at parent nights, banquets, and civic gatherings, in the mass media, and through personal contacts.

Many pupils and students have benefited through improved safety practices. Councils serve extremely well in designing and recommending programs of safety relating to traffic crossings, fire precautions, building codes, child molesters. Such involvement usually creates opportunities for individuals to serve as volunteer aides in conducting safety programs. Additional learner benefits may include development of skills in planning and organizing and practice in application of academic and other skills to real life problems.

SCHOOL BOARD, TEACHER, AND ADMINISTRATOR BENEFITS: Advice and assistance.

Solicited and freely given advice is one primary benefit of school community councils. Assistance is a second major benefit. The following broad areas can be appropriate functions:

1. Facilitating school communication with parents and community.
2. Assisting in providing support to parents, teachers, students, and community members who are involved in school programs.
3. Participating in the decision-making process.
4. Informing and advising school staff regarding community conditions, aspirations, and goals.

These activities reflect how the benefits of a council are rendered.

COUNCIL MEMBER BENEFIT: Involvement, status, and a vehicle for service.

Council members also receive benefits from service. One benefit is the opportunity to become involved in local educational efforts. Many people want to be a part of education. The problems, products, rewards, and processes of education are of interest to laypeople. A person need not be an educator or a parent to value such participation.

Community status is an important outcome of council membership. The individual member is held in high regard by peers, and is often considered a leader by those unofficially represented. As a result of serving on a council, many individual members develop their leadership abilities and become "spark plugs" in non-educational settings. Some former council members eventually become members of a board of education.

Council members often see their membership as a means of being of service to youth, to learners of all ages, to the community as a whole.

PARENTS, SCHOOL, AND COMMUNITY: Fulfilled needs, public relations,[1/] providing direct interaction between youth and adults.

While benefits of a well-organized and well-developed council accrue to everyone, schools should be cautioned against establishing councils for selfish reasons. According to Ben Brodinsky, member of the Old Saybrook, Connecticut School Board, there are five poor reasons for establishing community councils which school administrators should avoid. These reasons, as cited in the National School Board Association Education Policy Service, are:

1. Free labor: "If we had a community council, maybe it could dig up the facts we need."
2. Rubber stamp: "I'll bet a bottom dollar we could set up a school community council to O.K. our new policies on smoking and get the parents to accept them.
3. Shock absorber: "We've taken enough abuse on that issue. Let the school community council get some of the flak."
4. Front-man promoter: "We got cut down again on those sex education courses. Don't you think a citizens council could push them through next year?"
5. S.O.S. team: "We aren't getting anywhere with the fiscal people, and now we're in a head-on fight with the teachers. Don't you think a school community council could..."

The real purpose of a council is to gain ideas and to help hammer out sound principles for improving the school and community. Council members are advisors, not operators; they are idea givers, not policy makers; new direction givers, not necessarily backers of the status quo.

1/ See Appendix E: "Objectives of Public Involvement."

Despite the obvious advantages of encouraging participation in school planning and/or decision-making, this activity is not without its pitfalls. Some of these are described by Schmuck and Miles in their book, Organization Development in Schools. 1/ (modified)

Pitfalls of Participative Decision-Making

1. Costs in time and talent in the decision-making process can be too great, not worth the actual benefits.
2. The quality of the recommendation or decision can be impaired by allocation of inadequate resources to provide for participation.
3. Participation can bring to the surface latent conflicts.
4. The scope of participation may not match expectations.
5. Participants find they lack the skills for effective participation or have difficulty reaching agreement.
6. Finally, an individual may find that participation does not meet personal and interpersonal needs.

Despite these potential drawbacks of broad participation, skilled educational leaders can and must find ways of encouraging involvement. The tools and skills are available; the potential rewards warrant the effort.

1/ Schmuck, Richard A., and Matthew B. Miles (ed.). Organization Development in Schools, National Press Books, Palo Alto, California, 1971, p. 198.

EXERCISE #2

ROLE PLAYING: INCREASING COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

The issue is "how to get people involved."

Select one member of the group to play the role of Ms. Walsh, a community leader who works closely with the school; and another, Mr. Thomas, who is a somewhat "reluctant and negative" parent of a ninth grade student.

Select another individual to play the role of a school superintendent, Mr. Sanford, and another to be a board member, Ms. Foley, who feels threatened by the whole concept of a school community council.

After five minutes of individual preparation time, Ms. Walsh will try to convince Mr. Thomas to serve on the community council. Then Mr. Sanford will try to obtain Ms. Foley's support through board approval for the formation of a school community council.

Allow about three minutes for each exchange. List the main points and discuss in the group.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT: HOW DO YOU GET IT?

DO CITIZENS REALLY WANT TO SERVE?

The Gallup Poll of the Public's Attitudes toward the Public Schools was reported in the October, 1976 issue of the Phi Delta Kappan. Here is one question from the survey and the results.

The question asked was:

> Some school boards have appointed citizen advisory committees to deal with a number of school problems such as discipline, the curriculum, textbook selection, teacher evaluation, the athletic program, and the like. The committees report their findings to the school board for possible action. If such a plan were adopted here (or exists here), which of these problems would you most like to deal with on a citizen advisory committee?

Only 10% of all those questioned said they would not like to serve on such a committee or could not make up their minds. While many of the other 90% who chose committees on which they would like to serve might find it impossible or impractical to carry intentions, an extraordinary number of persons in a typical community were sufficiently interested in involvement.

The following list shows the percentage of respondents selecting each committee as one on which he/she would like to serve:

ADVISORY COMMITTEES	Percent Who Would Like to Serve on Such a Committee*
1. Discipline and related problems	47
2. Student/teacher relations	31
3. Career education	29
4. Student dropouts	29
5. Teacher evaluation	28
6. The handicapped student	26
7. Educational costs/finance	22
8. The curriculum	21
9. Education for citizenship	19
10. Work-study programs	19
11. Home study and work habits	19
12. Community use of school buildings	16
13. Pupil assessment and test results	15
14. School facilities	14
15. Public relations of schools	13
16. School transportation	12
17. The athletic program	12
18. Educational innovations	12
19. Extracurricular activities	11
20. Progress of recent graduates	9
None	4
Don't know/no answer	6

*Totals more than 100% because of multiple answers

Results of the survey apparently illustrate many citizens could be called upon for service.

INVOLVED CITIZENS AREN'T RECRUITED, THEY'RE DEVELOPED. Once some of the obstacles to citizen involvement have been removed, a developmental effort is necessary to provide the self-confidence, knowledge, and skills a person needs to participate. Particularly important is the development of citizen self-discovery -- "That I can make a difference." Individual self-confidence leads to group self-confidence, and in turn usually results in community self-confidence.

COMMUNITIES ARE MADE UP OF INDIVIDUALS. In discussing community involvement, we often fail to put faces on the masses of people making up a community. We tend to spend time looking for ways to motivate communities, rather than concentrating on the motivation of individuals. Community apathy is collective individual apathy. Approaches need to be tailored to individuals. The following can be helpful:

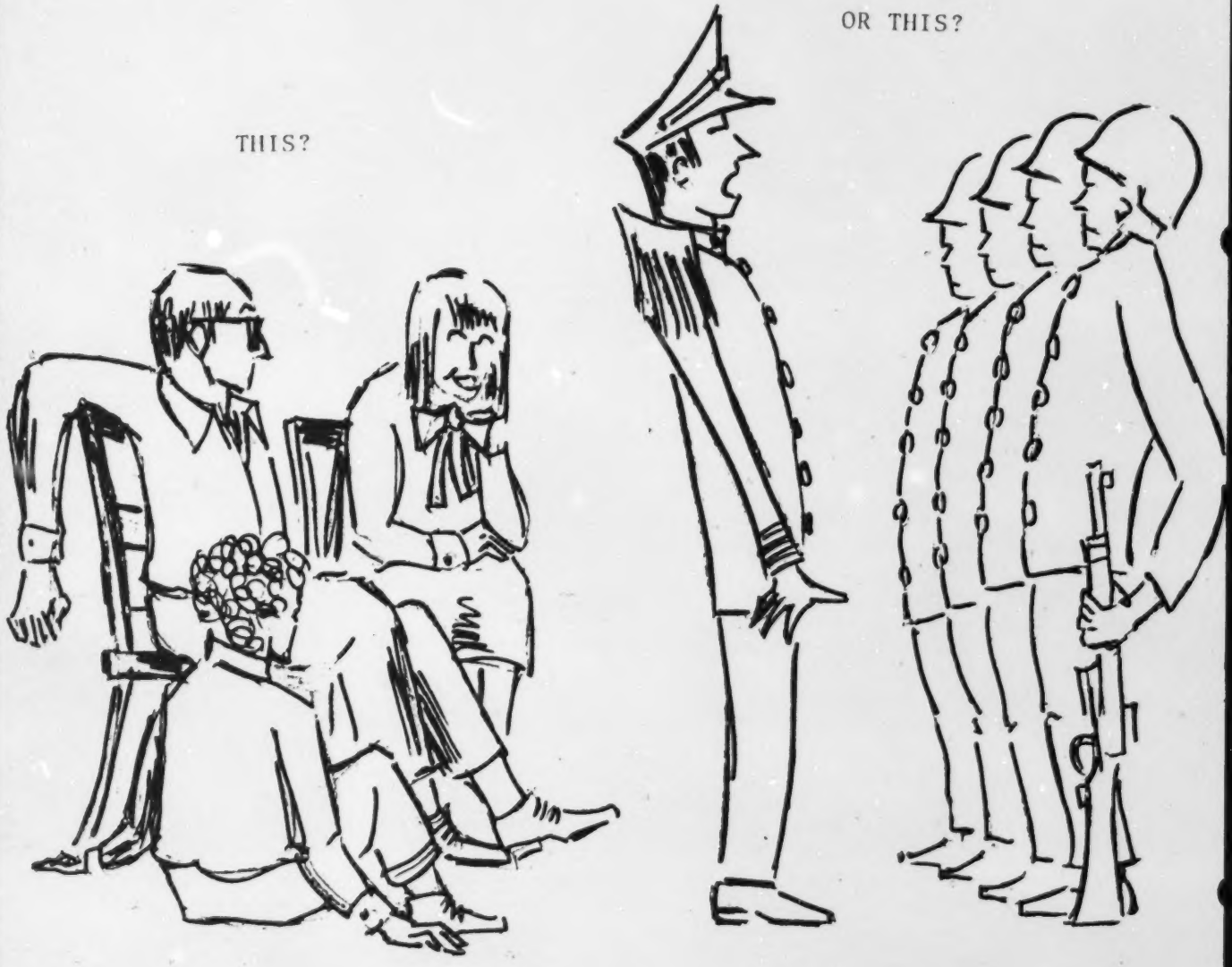
- Citizen participation and support is best developed on a one-to-one, face-to-face basis. Mass appeals generally are ineffective.
- Appeal to the individual's basic needs and interests. The individual must perceive a reason for becoming involved. (Man's basic needs include food and shelter, security, social and spiritual stimulation, group esteem, and self-actualization. These needs are not of equal magnitude among all individuals. What appeals to one will likely not have the same appeal to another.)
- Encouragement, accomplishment, and recognition are essential. Recognition is saying, "We value you." Enthusiasm begins with "thank you."
- Recognize that each individual has a unique combination of knowledge and skills. When recruiting indicate why they were selected, why their unique combination of knowledge. skills, and interests are vital to the success of the group. A sincere offer is one that can't be refused.
- People not involved in the planning are hesitant about the leg work.
- Good organization is essential. Group productivity takes time and effort; it doesn't just happen.
- Define clearly the job and when it will be finished. Few people volunteer for indefinite tasks for indefinite periods of time.
- Arrange for training in leadership and organizational skills. We all need it.
- Strive to understand and respect other points of view, develop empathy.
- Make efforts to understand the social, cultural, and physical environment of those involved.
- One reason people reject leadership roles is their fear of failing to communicate. Many people have a negative image of their communicative abilities. This image can be overcome.
- To understand others one must understand oneself.
- Model expected behavior.
- Be positive. Negativism is too common in approaches to citizen involvement. Either an activity is important and necessary, or it should be eliminated.
- Avoid unnecessary meetings -- communicate other ways.
- Be realistic in what is expected. Involving the council in defining the problem and in setting priorities tends to make the project "theirs" rather than others. A community must continually deal with the reality of trying to meet unlimited needs with limited resources; be careful not to confuse apathy with differences of opinion.
- Be patient. Try to avoid losing patience with and/or criticizing a community or organization that has a diversity of opinion and is slow in reaching group consensus. Participation is effective only when there is a diversity of viewpoints. That is what democracy is all about.

AND be patient with human weaknesses; everyone has them.

- KEEP TRYING. Don't give up easily. A technique which shows poor results on a given occasion hasn't necessarily failed, it may, however, need adjustment. NASA didn't stop its space efforts when one rocket failed. A community is more complex than a rocket.

Clearly, community involvement should entail higher ideals than getting turnout and support for the individual activities. Participation, to be of real value, must be concerted, continuous, ongoing efforts. Permanent structures and procedures must be established to stimulate and make productive use of citizen input. Accomplishment depends, to a great extent, on the willingness and ability of existing group/community leaders to devote their time and talents to these ends.

Citizen participation is both a democratic right and responsibility. Responsibility for meaningful citizen participation lies with the citizen as well as with public officials and community organizations. For citizen participation to be sustained, it must be a satisfying, rewarding and productive experience.



EXERCISE #3

SELECTING A SCHOOL COMMUNITY COUNCIL

You are the school principal. As a part of the district's process of decentralized management, you have been asked to form a school community council for your school. The functions of the council are vague at this time, but you have been told it should not exceed fifteen members.

It is now Wednesday. You have been asked to report to the Superintendent's Cabinet next Tuesday on the types of people (teachers, parents, etc.) you plan to put on the council and how they will be selected.

Write your report below: (ten minutes)

Share your ideas with others at the table. Select one plan to present as an example to the entire group.

SELECTING A SCHOOL COMMUNITY COUNCIL

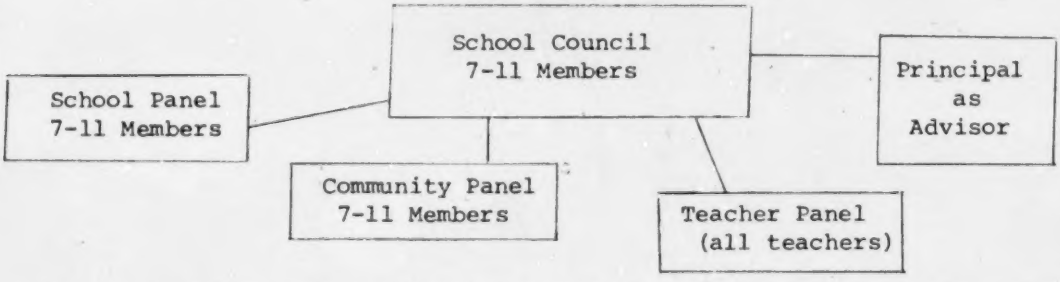
After a decision has been made to implement a school community council, a steering committee can be established to take a close look at the community and to develop a list of representative groups. A list might include:

- School employees: Principal, teachers, custodians, aides, secretaries, nurse, cafeteria workers, etc.
- School-related groups: Academic advisory councils, PTA, parent groups, Federations, associations, etc.
- Agencies: Social services, churches, adult education, governmental, recreation, health, police, etc.
- Business and industry: Local business persons, industrial representatives, etc.
- Service clubs and other Community Groups: Kiwanis, Rotary, Lions, senior citizens, youth groups, singles, etc.

Brick and Associates,[1/] working with the Fountain Valley School District, identified some variables to consider when selecting individual committee members.

The council should be representative but not cumbersome, functioning with seven to eleven members. Each community, school, and student panel may also have seven to eleven members. (The teacher panel may function with total staff) When all the panels meet as a council, the teacher panel will be represented by seven to eleven members. The principal serves as advisory to the council.

The chart below illustrates one organizational arrangement.



Title I, Title VII, PTA panels and other groups can be added to the arrangement as desirable. (Advisory groups may also be smaller in number)

Individual membership qualifications can include:

- An unselfish interest in the public schools, the community, and every child.
- A willingness to devote necessary time.

1/ Brick, Michael, School Community Council. Fountain Valley School District, 1972.

- The ability to think objectively and independently.
- A clear recognition of the close relationship between the community, staff, students, and the educational program.
- The capability of recognizing and distinguishing between the functions of the board of trustees, educators, the district community council and the school community council.
- The habit of withholding judgment on critical goals until all pertinent facts are available.
- A record which has demonstrated consistently a respect for other's opinions and for the dignity of each individual.
- A demonstrated record as an advocate of the American democratic system.

Students may be nominated unless their parent or other relative is elected or appointed a member of the council. (Academic achievement usually is not a criterion for qualification.)

After various groups have been identified and desirable individual qualities considered, several steps can be taken. Extend invitations to representative leaders and groups to meet and discuss the needs and plans for a council and to determine future steps. The school liaison staff person and steering committee members may themselves serve as a committee to work toward development of a school community council, or they may select a committee from leaders in identified community groups.

Find a suitable time and place for an organizational meeting. Invitations can be sent out over the signature of the steering committee members.

At the meeting have someone explain what a school community council is, what its purpose is, how it will operate, the kind of problems with which it will deal, and how much the efforts will mean. Allow time for discussion.

EXAMPLE OF HOW A COMMITTEE COULD BE SELECTED

EXAMPLE OF HOW A COMMITTEE COULD BE SELECTED

COMMUNITY AWARENESS EDUCATION PROJECT
3032 E. Belmont
Fresno, California 93701
Phone (209) 485-6780

COMPOSITION OF
SCHOOL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The following is another example of a local School Advisory Committee. Parents comprise 51% or more of whatever number chossen to make the Committee. Of a twenty-one (21) member School Advisory Committee, the composition may be:

NUMBER	TITLE	PERCENTAGE
14	Parents	67%
2	Teachers	9%
2	Aides	9%
1	Principal	5%
1	School Liaison	5%
1	Agency Representative	5%

A School Advisory Committee can also be composed of:

A. Parents elected by majority vote of those present at an open meeting (voting to be done by secret ballot).
B. Teachers elected by the faculty.
c. Aides elected by Teacher Aides.
D. Principal or his designee
E. Community, agency or organization or interested individual to be elected by 2/3 vote of all the above members.

EXERCISE #4

FUNCTIONS OF THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Assume you have a reasonable and competent council at your school. You have been given great latitude by the superintendent as to what functions the council will perform. List below some of these functions.

What planning functions would you want the council to perform (or share in)?

1.

2.

3.

In what areas would you turn to the council for advice? (Subject to approval by a legal authority.)

1.

2.

3.

On what types of issues do you think the council could make decisions? (Delegated responsibility from a legal authority.)

1.

2.

3.

FUNCTIONS OF A SCHOOL COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Functions vary from council to council, but certain functions are common, e.g., reeds assessment, planning, coordinating and communicating, activating new resources, education.

These functions are not inclusive, only suggestive. The intent of this section is to discuss functions which seem to be common to most councils, be it a community-wide council, a neighborhood council, or a steering committee.

Needs Assessment

Needs assessment is a function of immense value. The old adage that decisions are only as good as the information on which they are based applies to planing and programming. Without proper data on which to base plans, programs may not be relevant to needs.

Needs assessment, if properly discharged by the council, can be most time consuming; it is continuous and involves constant monitoring.

Responsibilities

- Expand and utilize, when and where possible, community members in ad hoc task forces for the purposes of broader involvement, support, identification of information and sharing of responsibilities. While the membership of the council proper may be composed of fifteen to twenty members, a broader involvement and utilization of community members occurs through task forces. Many people do not have the time or interest to be involved in all council activities but will devote time to specific interest areas.

- Discover known facts, interests and opinions of the community. This can occur in several ways e.g., surveys, personal interviews, speaking to groups, talking with agency personnel, etc. Existing sources of information in a community such as official studies, and sources of information from local, county, state, and federal sources are useful. Regardless of methods used, a planned and organized approach is essential.

PLANNING

Good programs don't just happen. They are well thought out and based upon sound information. Individuals who were instrumental in acquiring facts often want to be a part of a planning team. A function of the council is to assist the programmers in planning by supplying needed facts, information and counsel in determining programs to meet identified needs and/or desires.

Responsibilities

As councils become involved in needs assessment activities, they become knowledgeable of community needs and resources. Relying on the needs assessment data, prudent planning can take place by:

- reviewing the needs, interests, etc.
- placing them in priority order
- examining existing programs and services to see if the priority or needs can be met

- examining the feasibility and constraints for each alternative program in relation to priorities
- identifying alternative courses of action
- making recommendations to the policy-makers or program administrator
- assisting in the design of a desired program

Planning methodology should be flexible enough to allow for changes in priorities; if an emergency situation arises and priorities need to be changed, the mechanism shouldn't preclude modification.

COMMUNICATION AND COORDINATION

Another function of a council is that of coordination and communication. This function is basic to the primary tenets of community participation, i.e., coordinating planning and action avoiding unneeded duplication of programs and services, and full communication with community agencies, groups, and community members.

For clarification, a distinction is made between needed and unneeded duplicate programs. In one community may be found ten summer camps for children from middle income families. Based upon need and number of children, only seven of the day camps are needed to reach the children from middle income families; four camps are needed to provide camping experiences for children from low income families. Three of the day camps for "middle income" children are unneeded duplicate programs.

As council members establish a two way flow of communication between the council and the community, they become more aware of community needs and community resources; council members become more aware of agency schedules, programs, clients, and facilities, and are in a position to suggest and influence ways and means to coordinate existing programs.

The council has the responsibility to maintain a two way flow of communication; both contacts and communication increase. So does the knowledge of the community and community resources. Using the various means of the media, (e.g., newsletters, church bulletins, newspapers, radio, mail, telephone, T.V., brochures, PTA, speaking engagements, etc.) to inform the public on council activities makes the community more aware of what is being done by Community Education. Greater community support for and participation in Community Education results.

Another responsibility is to visit other councils both in and out of the community to determine different kinds of involvement and actions.

As the council develops its communication systems efforts in coordination are enhanced. Members will become more aware of services being provided, facilities being used, and personnel providing those services, etc. This is synergism, meaning the whole is greater than the sum of its parts, or two or more people working together can achieve results which neither individual can accomplish alone.

ACTIVATING NEW RESOURCES

As the council performs its functions, it becomes more aware of other resources in and out of the community. These resources include manpower, facilities and equipment, finances. The council should actively acquire information about available federal, state and local resources, including public monies.

Attempt should be made to discover formal and informal leadership within the community, people who are opinion-makers and who influence decision-makers.

By introducing new members into the existing leadership core there is a flow of new thinking which when combined with the existing leaders gives not only the stability and continuity needed in community fact finding and planning, but new ideas. The council can be instrumental in this effort.

Responsibilities

The council has the responsibility to learn about various funding possibilities for community education programs. As such they should encourage program and administrative staff to provide them with new funding information.

The council also may have the responsibility of securing resources, both physical and financial, from the community. These may take the form of special fund drives, recruiting volunteers, and reciprocal facility and equipment loans.

To develop new leadership, the council can sponsor a six to eight week leadership training course designed to train individuals in the community who are interested in assuming leadership positions in different agency boards and councils. A training course provides an opportunity to develop leadership abilities, promote cooperative planning and programming, and establish a base for common understanding.

Often times, individuals become members of councils and are thrust into roles and responsibilities with which they are unfamiliar. This creates confusion, frustration and, in some cases, a lack of harmony within the council. Statements such as "I don't know what I am doing," or "I don't know what I am supposed to do," or "How can we do this?" may arise. The council has the responsibility to provide opportunities for new council members to understand their role and responsibilities. This facilitates both the effectiveness and contributions to the council.

EVALUATION

A council must evaluate its own activities, as well as assist in evaluating the success of programs with which it is concerned. The council must continually ask questions such as: Have the plans that were set forth been properly programmed for the intended need or desire? Is the need being met? Is new direction required? Is an adjustment in programming necessary? Is a shift in priorities needed?

If the council does not monitor its activities, it may lose sight of its intended purpose. The same can be said about the need for evaluating educational programs.

Responsibilities

Evaluation is a responsibility often negated by councils or done in a non-organized manner. To evaluate where and what has been accomplished means goals and priorities should be set at the planning stage. A continual evaluation of progress keeps the council or program from straying too far afield.

The council has the responsibility to determine and to make public its goals and objectives. The goals and objectives should be stated and placed within a time frame that is measurable so at the end of the project cycle, funding year, etc., an assessment can be made as to attainment or nonattainment. By stating objectives in the beginning, a structure is being formulated that will facilitate planning and direction for council activities. Periodic input should be received from the program units so activities can be assessed at different times, rather than waiting until the end of the year to make assessment. Through periodic evaluation, councils can determine if its objectives, and that of programs, are being reached.

We have now identified the major areas in which the school community council might serve. To be of practical use these must be refined into specific tasks.

Each council will want to develop a list of ongoing tasks which need to be performed in its own situation. The following items are from a list developed by one school community council. Others of course, may have many different tasks.

List of School Community Council Tasks

1. Conduct, with resident assistance, a community needs assessment.
2. Develop a list of priorities based upon needs, wants and problems.
3. Make recommendations relative to program development.
4. Assist in the establishment of program goals and objectives.
5. Determine a scheme for evaluating progress.
6. Develop a system for community-school communication to promote publicity for existing programs.
7. Promote activities for children and adults - the total community.
8. Coordinate community services and activities.
9. Develop support for the community-school program.
10. Act as an information clearinghouse.
11. Develop a community resource index and program.
12. Encourage and provide special programs.
13. Act as a sounding board for suggestions, ideas, and new programs.
14. Address problems as natural and expected.

WHO SHOULD BE RESPONSIBLE FOR WHAT?

Once a comprehensive list of potential tasks is developed, it is necessary to determine what individual or group should be responsible for each task. Also note those items which the council should not do.

Let's examine two levels of responsibility. First is what might be called ultimate responsibility. This is identified when it is determined "who" goes to jail if the function is not completed satisfactorily. Those holding this type of responsibility are usually boards of education, superintendents, and sometimes principals. Usually ultimate responsibility cannot be shared.

A second level of responsibility is operational. This responsibility is sometimes shared. The person fired or relieved of an assignment in the event of failure has operational responsibility. Principals, department chairpersons, project directors, community councils, classroom teachers, and others carry operational responsibilities.

EXERCISE #5

The following exercise cites tasks related specifically to program evaluation. It is in current use in helping councils define their roles in program evaluation. The format and technique would be equally applicable to different lists of tasks or functions.

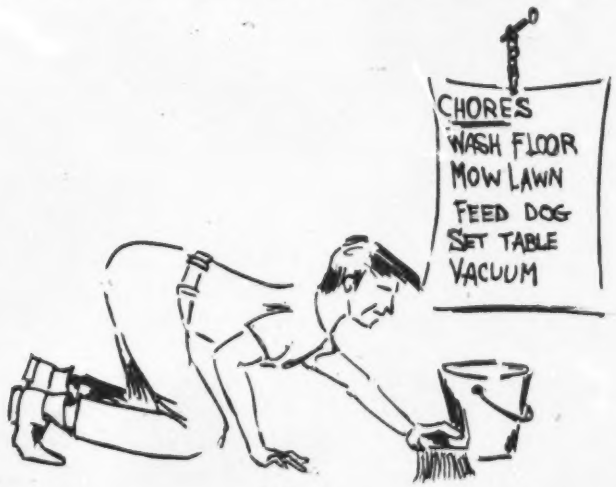
The purpose of this exercise is to demonstrate that implementing a sound procedure for program evaluation is a team effort. Each member of the team has the primary responsibility to perform certain functions and may have secondary or support responsibilities in others. Your table will be assigned a certain number of the activities listed, and will be asked to reach a consensus as to where lies the primary responsibility. Try to make a definite decision; because different situations may dictate different assignments, it may be impossible to agree on the assignment of primary responsibility.

On the following pages are listed many activities which someone should do when program evaluation is undertaken. Take the following steps:

- When possible, place a number "1" in only one column to indicate the person or body which has the major and direct responsibility for that activity. If you have trouble deciding who this should be, ask yourself, "Who should receive the blame for not performing the activity?"
- Place a number "2" in the column for those persons (if any) who have secondary or support responsibility for an activity. This may involve more than one. This type of responsibility may involve providing basic input or information to decision-makers.
- Leave the other columns.

People at the table will probably agree on some items, but not on all. Discuss the reasons for agreements and disagreements, and try to reach a consensus of the group on the primary responsibilities (the number 1's). The table will be asked to report its decisions. If there is time, continue discussion of the secondary or support functions.

Note: The actual form has been modified; its use here is for the exercise purpose only.



Except where otherwise noted, these should be considered as school level activities.

FUNCTION OR TASK	The Board of Trustees	School Community Council or Committee	The Superintendent (or designate)	The School Principal (or designate)	The Project or Program Manager, or Department Chairperson	A Special Evaluator (County, District, or Private)	Classroom Personnel (teachers, paid or volunteer aides)	Students
EXAMPLE: Adopt a district policy concerning evaluation.	1		2	2				
1. Develop procedures for implementing district evaluation policy.								
2. Recommend the resources needed for evaluating a school-wide program.								
3. Establish priorities for following up on recommendations growing out of previous evaluations.								
4. Decide on manner of recognizing high quality staff achievement of program goals.								
5. Recommend whether to expand, continue, modify, or drop the program.								
6. Inform staff of probable community reaction to changes in the program.								
7. Identify possible constraints or road blocks to conducting the evaluation.								
8. Determine the criteria for selecting measurement instruments.								
9. Develop new assessment or measuring instruments, if needed.								
10. Collect evaluation data.								
11. Analyze evaluation data.								

FUNCTION OR TASK	The Board of Trustees	School Community Council or Committee	The Superintendent (or designate)	The School Principal (or designate)	The Project or Program Manager, or Department Chairperson	A Special Evaluator (County, District, or Private)	Classroom Personnel (teachers, paid or volunteer aides)	Students
12. Inform the staff about the relationship of the program to community needs.								
13. Develop school "climate" which promotes honest, effective evaluation.								
14. Ask questions to be answered by the program evaluation.								
15. Decide to whom the evaluation reports should be submitted.								
16. Write conclusions and recommendations in the evaluation report.								
17. Recommend corrective action to be taken for inadequate results of the program.								
18. Assign personnel to conduct the program evaluation.								
19. Provide community data about the program.								
20. Relate the evaluation to the program goals and objectives.								
21. Determine which types of measurement instruments to use.								
22. Determine the population or sample to be used in data collection.								
23. Monitor and/or supervise data collection.								

The Principal's Role[1/]

The principal serves as an advisor, he/she is not a member of the council. The principal represents the school board of trustees. The accountability and responsibility for local school decisions must rest with the principal, who operates under the delegated authority of the board of trustees.

The responsibilities for personnel matters at each school site rest with the principal. The school community council may advise the principal of general concerns regarding students or district personnel. Any challenge to the conduct or competency of an individual staff member must be pursued through procedures established by state law and/or policies of the school district.

Specifically, the school principal has the responsibility to:

- Establish a school community council in accordance with adopted guidelines and procedures.
- Attend all school community council meetings.
- Provide secretarial services for the council and related activities.
- Advise the council on all questions brought before the council and panel meetings.
- Consider all advice, factors, and viewpoints regarding goal setting, evaluation design, and other issues of concern.
- Provide adequate housing, supplies, and accommodations for council, and panel meetings.
- Act as liaison between council, panels, staff, students, parent groups, district administration and interested citizens.
- Make internal school location decisions considering council suggestions, legal requirements, board policy, and other procedural requirements of the district.
- Forward recommendations and suggestions when such suggestions or recommendations are outside the scope of the local school decision-making authority.

Board of Education's Responsibility[2/]

The board of education's function is to establish policies within which the district administrative staff operates the school district.

Direct responsibilities of the board of education with regard to the district school community council are:

- Develop goals and procedures for community involvement.
- Adopt programs to meet local community needs.
- Implement an operational district council plan which encourages community involvement.
- Establish communication procedures with all segments of the community.
- Review specific district council recommendations submitted to the board of education through the superintendent of schools.

1/ Fountain Valley School District (modified) as reported in ACSA Project Leadership Presenter's Guide, Arthur N. Thayer and Larry G. Ruttan.

2/ Eureka City School District (modified) as reported in ACSA Project Leadership's Guide, Arthur N. Thayer and Larry G. Ruttan.

Superintendent of School's Responsibility

The superintendent, who operates under the authority of the board of education, has the responsibility to work with the district school community council in supplying resource information as needed. The superintendent considers factors and viewpoints bearing on a problem, including federal, state and local requirements, and acts as an advisor to the council.

- Advise the district council on matters related to educational programs in accordance with legal mandates, board policy, and procedural requirements of the district.
- Analyze opposing views on many issues and consider all advice, factors, and viewpoints presented.
- Study, report back, and advise the council on queries brought before the council.
- Act as liaison between the council, district staff, board of education, and other interested citizens.
- Submit district council suggestions to the board of education.

EXERCISE #6

DEVELOPING WRITTEN POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Some school-related councils often have a great need for the development of written policies and procedures. These fall into the categories listed below. It is not always necessary to take all of these steps, but what policies and procedures are needed should be prepared and adopted.

- An authorizing policy adopted by the board of education.
- School administrative procedures to guide the operation of the council.
- Bylaws developed and adopted by the council itself.
- Rules of order or procedure for the council developed and/or adopted by the council (i.e., Roberts Rules of Order).

Prepare a written recommendation to your superintendent indicating which of these types of documents should be developed in relation to your school community council, and state one or two primary reasons for each recommendation.

SAMPLE POLICY FOR A SCHOOL COMMUNITY COUNCIL[1/]

One type of written policy is one adopted by the board of education. Below is such a policy in operation in the Cupertino School District.

PROCEDURES FOR CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEES FOR SCHOOLS IN CUPERTINO:

"The purpose of School Advisory Committees is to provide a method whereby citizens and educators can begin to understand better the attitudes and opinions which are held in the school community environment. Such committees will have as their purpose improved communication and understanding. It is not the intention of the Board of Education that these committees become policy-making bodies or that they manage or direct the school. It is assumed, however, that through improved understanding and information, the school can and will change in the direction of the clearly demonstrated needs and desires of the community to be served.

"Authorization. Such committees are authorized under Board Policy No. 1230 - Citizens Advisory for the Staff, and shall operate according to organizational constraints as established by the Superintendent of Schools. The organizational format for each School Advisory Committee shall be submitted to the Superintendent for review and approval.

"Committee Composition. All residents of the school attendance area, all parents of children enrolled in the school, and all school staff members shall be eligible for membership and participation.

"The principal shall call an organizational meeting to which all persons eligible for participation are invited.

"At an organizational meeting or at a subsequent meeting called for this purpose, the School Advisory Committee shall be selected or elected by those in attendance and an organizational plan established.

"The specific number of people serving at any one time on a given School Advisory Committee shall be left to the discretion of the individual school community; this committee makeup shall appear in the organizational format as provided for in section II - Authorization.

"The committee may function as an arm of the PTA or Home/School Club or as an independent unit, depending on the preference of that school community. The committee may elect such officers as it determines are necessary and desirable to accomplish the work of the committee. The principal of the school shall serve as advisor to the group.

"Meetings. Meetings shall be open public meetings and shall be held with sufficient frequency to assure continuity of activity and attainment of the purpose of the committee.

"Functions. The function of the committee will be to conduct and maintain such activities as are intended to: 1) Improve home/school communication; 2) Increase parent understanding of present school programs; 3) Improve

---

1/ See Appendix B: "Board Policy on School Community Councils."

staff understanding of parents' opinions and attitudes toward the school; 4) Improve joint exploration of future school needs and the improvement of the school programs.

"The format in which the above functions can best be achieved shall be determined by the individual School Advisory Committee.

"Communication with the School District. It must be understood that under Policy No. 1230, such a committee is established to provide a Citizens Advisory function to the staff of the school, and it is assumed that the important work of the committee will occur within this context. If the committee wishes to communicate ideas or information to the district administration or the Board of Education, the following channel is recommended.

"Such communications shall be jointly presented by the principal and the chairman of the Advisory Committee and should be forwarded to the Superintendent of Schools through the Area Director responsible for the school making the submission. Communications to the Board of Education should be routed in the same manner and will be transmitted by the Superintendent of Schools."

CONSIDERATIONS FOR WRITING BYLAWS[1/]

Once board authorizations is obtained and membership secured, the problem of organization remains. An obvious question to consider is, "Do we need bylaws for our school community committee?" This degree of formality may not be necessary. It may even be harmful. If bylaws are to be developed, there are important considerations which may make them a positive force rather than a detriment. Go about their formulation as rapidly as possible. To dwell on writing bylaws distracts from the major purpose - SERVING PEOPLE!

Councils, in developing bylaws and/or constitutions relating to their operation and structure, should give particular attention to the following areas:

Purpose

The goals and objectives of the council should be carefully considered and clearly stated.

Officers

The following items pertaining to officers should be delineated.

1. Duties and responsibilities
2. Terms of office
3. Method of selection

Membership

(See Section I - Selection and Organization)

Attendance

Attention should be given to developing a system to assure regular attendance. Regular attendance is a necessary and important contribution to maintaining continual dialogue and enhancing the potential of the council to achieve its purpose and objectives.

1/ See Appendixes Sample Bylaws.

Meeting Requirements

Conduct meetings on a regularly scheduled basis. This allows for continual communication between the school and community. Attendance improves when council members have a planned schedule of meeting dates to which they can adjust their own individual schedules. A schedule of meeting dates should be determined by a general consensus of council members

Task Forces

The extensive involvement of the council in carrying out its functions and responsibilities will probably necessitate both temporary and permanent task forces. Some examples of task forces are:

- Education
- Neighborhood and social problems
- School facilities
- Programs and activities
- Needs assessment

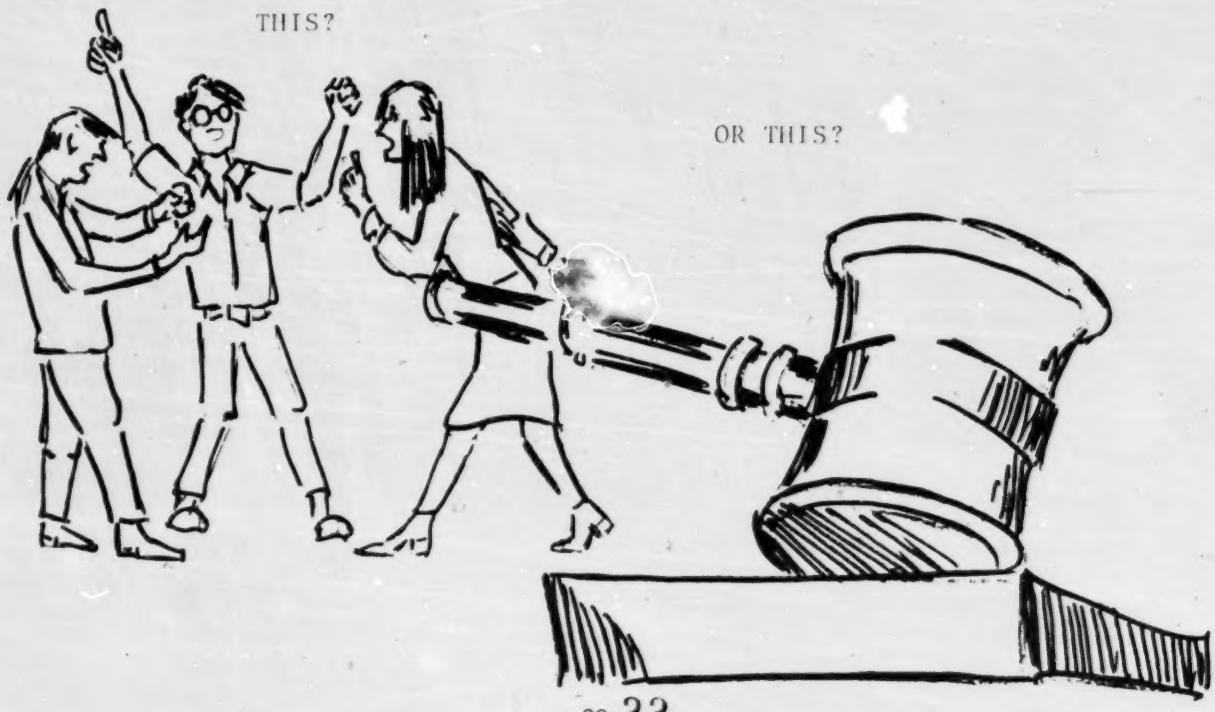
Amendment Process

A council should develop a mechanism to change, or delete, those sections of its bylaws and/or constitution which is not deemed necessary or which affect the extent to which the council is able to achieve its desired goals and objectives.

Quorum

Council meetings should not be considered official unless there is a quorum of members present. The number of members necessary to constitute a quorum should be determined by the council. (A quorum is seldom less than one-third of a group's membership.)

Appendix A contains an actual example of bylaws prepared in Los Angeles



ASSESSING THE TRAINING NEEDS OF THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY COUNCIL

The results of the data collected when evaluating the school community council may provide specific content for developing a training program for the council. Additional information may be obtained by using one of the methods listed on Page 33. Topics need to be chosen and priorities given according to needs as seen by the council, as well as those noted by others.

A survey is one way of determining what training is needed. The method of administering the survey can also be determined by the council. Following is a survey actually used for a project specially funded by the California State Department of Education. It is printed here as an example of what can be developed to meet the local needs of school community councils.

SAMPLE SURVEY OF TOPICS FOR COUNCIL TRAINING

Purpose: To find out what kind of training is needed this year for members of the council.

Who are you? I am (check one)

_____ presently a council member
_____ expecting to be elected to the council
_____ other (specify)

What is your position?

Administrator _____ Parent _____ Teacher _____

Community Member _____ Aide _____
Support
Personnel _____ Other (specify) _____

Instructions:

Rank the following items 1 to 4, placing a "1" before the item which you feel is most important for training, "2" for the item which is next in importance, and so on until you have rated the least important item as "4." Please check those topics under each category that you think would be of most help to you.

_____ KNOWING YOUR LOCAL SCHOOL

A profile of the school population
Local school policies and procedures
The school's curriculum and instructional programs (other programs in education)

Specially funded school programs
School problems and needs
The school's communication network
Other (specify) _____

_____ WORKING WITH AND INVOLVING THE COMMUNITY

Community needs and goals
Community characteristics
Community resources
Recruiting and involving people from the community
Getting information to the community
Other (list) _____

_____ HOW A SCHOOL COMMUNITY WORKS

Goals, structure, function
Responsibilities and duties of members
Group processes and decision-making
Other (list) _____

_____ SPECIAL SKILLS FOR SCHOOL COMMUNITY COUNCIL MEMBERS

Understanding terms used in school programs and special projects.
Conducting a needs assessment
Understanding and writing goals and objectives
Developing budgets
Understanding and using evaluation techniques
Observing in the classroom
Methods for obtaining information
Communication skills
Understanding needs of participating project children
Other (specify) _____

EXAMPLE OF HOW A COMMITTEE COULD BE SELECTED

COMMUNITY AWARENESS EDUCATION PROJECT
3032 E. Belmont
Fresno, California 93701
Phone (209) 485-6780

_____
DATE

EVALUATION OF PRESENTATION

Your evaluation of our inservice will be considered in planning future programs.

Please complete this brief form and turn in to the evaluator at the end of the meeting or mail to the above address.

VALUE OF INSERVICE EXCELLENT GOOD SATISFACTORY POOR

What I liked best about this inservice was .....

If I were planning the next program I would .....

I would like the Community Awareness Education Project to conduct additional programs with the following subjects .....

Location of inservice I attended .....

OPTIONAL
NAME _____ PHONE _____

ADDRESS _____

MAINTAINING INTEREST

Once programs and activities have begun, there can be a "let-down" on the part of the council members. Now what can be done? One major consideration lies in the way in which meetings are conducted. To go into detail on this matter requires a manual in itself, and we will not cover it here. Two good sources are listed on the bottom of this page.1/ This is the time to be reminded that the need for the work of the council has just begun.

Some suggestions for continued support and interest are:

1. Review the list of priorities. What item should be tackled next? How can each task be accomplished?
2. Take a problematic approach. What problems are being encountered in reaching the community, in presenting programs and activities?
3. Determine how programs and activities will be evaluated and evaluate them.
4. Determine ways that change is taking place in the community as a direct result of the program.
5. Get out into the community. Knock on doors. Help people help themselves.

Many results become apparent once the community council has begun to function. Some results might be:

- an increase in participation in activities by youth and adults
- an improved educational "climate" in the community
- a list of citizens' wants and needs are made known
- a secondary echelon of leadership is developed
- a discussion of problems leading to lessening of crisis situations is fostered.
- a list of opinion leaders becomes identifiable
- a list of resources within an area are brought to bear on problems
- an awareness that "things" are accomplished more readily by a group than by individuals occurs
- the individuals build self-confidence
- the members of the community realize they have a voice in their future.

Build on each success. Look at each activity as having the potential to build other activities and other successes.

Each person within the community who subscribes to the community council concept is a "goodwill ambassador" and will encourage others to become involved.

Although the need varies greatly from one community to another, the matter of reimbursable expenses should be considered. Can low-income parents afford to participate? The Community Awareness Education Project of Fresno has developed a list of such expenses. You may wish to develop a similar list to fit your own situation.

1/ Halverson, Donald E., Effective Meeting Management, San Mateo County Office of Education, November, 1974.

Participate in the Meetings, Community Awareness Education Project, Fresno, California (written in both English and Spanish).

These are some of the parent expenses which may be paid from Compensatory Education funds:

1. Tuition and registration fees for workshops and conferences
2. Mileage and parking fees
3. Taxi fares
4. Meals
5. Lodging expenses
6. Meeting facilities
7. Transportation to and from school advisory committee meetings
8. Babysitting fees
9. Parent inservices
10. Visitation expenses to other Compensatory Education schools
11. Parent education classes
12. Equipment and supplies

COMMUNITY AWARENESS EDUCATION PROJECT
Fresno, California

EVALUATING THE WORK OF THE COUNCIL

Two types of evaluations should be completed with regard to school community councils:

- An evaluation to see if the school community council is established and functioning according to the guidelines of the project.

- An evaluation to see how the council itself is functioning as a group.

Agencies funding special programs have a high interest in how the council functions in relation to approved guidelines, while persons who spend energies in school community council activities desire to know to what extent their council is meeting its objectives and thereby having an impact on educational programs.

Both the method used to collect the evaluation data and the report of the data should serve to aid the school community council in meeting the funding agency's objectives as well as those of the council itself. The content areas on which data are collected should come from the funding agents and the council's objectives.

The following methods have proved successful for collecting data relative to both purposes of council evaluation:

- Have a specialist in this area observe intermittenly at the meetings and point out the strengths and weaknesses of its functioning.
- Obtain a consultant to interview the members of the council to ascertain their perceptions of its effectiveness.
- Obtain reactions on a questionnaire the members themselves. A sample questionnaire suitable for most councils is provided on Page 34.
- Use county and state consultants to monitor the council activities.
- Have members set up criteria as to what determines council effectiveness and have them rate each meeting.
- Divide the group into small groups and have each group prepare a list of the Council Strengths and Council Weaknesses. Compile a master list. Use the same process to generate changes to be made by the council.

Sample

COUNCIL MEETING QUESTIONNAIRE
RATING SHEET

Pre _____ Interim _____ Post _____
date date date

Please assign the number that is most often identified with your council meetings.

1 - not typical of our meetings
2 - fairly typical
3 - is typical of our meetings

1._____Members of the council know what items are to be discussed prior to the meeting.

2._____Members arrive on time for the meeting.

3._____An equitable procedure for getting items on the agenda is being implemented.

4._____Members carry out their commitments.

5._____Members are free to say how they truly feel about a problem.

6._____Members keep confidentialities when agreed to.

7._____A problem is thoroughly understood before a vote is taken.

8._____Members ask clarifying questions when in doubt.

9._____The "real" problems which are currently important to the members are discussed.

10._____Members assist each other in staying on the topic, controlling excessive talkers, interruptions, etc.

11._____Members have a chance to vote on more than one solution to the problem.

12._____Decisions made at the meetings are clearly understood.

13._____It is clear who is to carry out what decisions and when they are to be completed.

14._____Members care about the children in the project for which they are advising and work on their behalf.

15._____As a member of the council, I am an important participant in the meetings.

Sample

QUESTIONS FOR SCHOOL COMMUNITY COUNCIL MEMBERS AND OTHER PARENTS

1. Why do you do what you do in the school?
2. What unique things do you do when you come to school?
3. How has the program affected parents?
4. How was the school community council selected?
5. Were parents involved in a meaningful way in planning the school program?
6. Is there a way for parents to voice dissatisfaction?
7. How do parents become involved in decision-making and at what level?
8. How does the school community council make its own decisions?
9. What are some decisions the school community council has made?
10. What tasks does the school community council do in evaluating the school program?
11. Are test scores given to the school community council?
12. How does the school community council help monitor program activities to insure that things are on schedule?
13. What happens at a typical school community council meeting?
14. What is the most outstanding accomplishment of the school community council?
15. Are there any non-parent members of the school community council? What are their roles?
16. Are there any advisory committee training programs for school community council members?
17. How are the needs of school community council members assessed?
18. Is there a certificated staff person who serves as a resource person to the school community council?
19. What involvement of parents was there prior to the special program?
20. What has been done to help all parents be informed about the program?
21. What has been done recently to attract parent volunteers?
22. How many parents do volunteer?
23. What is done to help volunteers become more effective?
24. Do volunteers work only in their children's classes, or in other classes?
25. How is the work of volunteers coordinated, scheduled, evaluated, etc?
26. Do you have a list of special resource volunteers with special skills?

27. How do parent education components get planned, implemented, and evaluated?

28. How do parents feel about the school as a result of having been involved?

29. What are the duties of the personnel who are paid for from the program funds?

30. What support is given the program from the district office or the school level personnel, who are not paid out of program funds?

31. What recommendations about the program do you have for improvement?

APPENDIX A

Proposed Bylaws[1/]

Article I Name and Location

Section 1

The name of this organization shall be the Area H Superintendent's Advisory Council of Delegates from Area H school Advisory Councils, hereinafter referred to as the "Council."

Section 2

The community area encompassed shall have the same boundaries as the boundaries affixed by the Los Angeles Unified School District for Area H.

Article II Purposes

The basic goal is to provide a quality education for every pupil. It is expected that this Council will contribute to the attainment of this goal as it serves these purposes:

1. To participate in the assessment of educational needs, establishment of priorities, and advise on the resource needs of the school.
2. To make recommendations regarding the planning of an Area H educational program and the budget resources available for it.
3. To become familiar with the educational program and the evaluation of it.
4. To contribute to the definition of educational objectives and to the specification of indicators to show progress toward objectives.
5. To orient and advise Area H Staff regarding conditions in the community.
6. To advise the Area H Superintendent and his Staff regarding policies affecting the interests and welfare of pupils including such matters as discipline, homework, and student body affairs.
7. To consider and make recommendations regarding proposed changes in the educational program.
8. To assist the Area H Superintendent and Staff in initiating certain new programs.

1/ Los Angeles Unified School District, Area H, Los Angeles, CA.

9. To facilitate school communication with parents and citizens and mobilize public support for the schools.

10. To assist in securing the support and services of parents, teachers, and students.

11. To identify available community resources and assist in securing them for the Area H Schools.

12. To participate in the evaluation of the school and its academic effectiveness and make recommendations to the Superintendent and appropriate personnel or authority.

Article III Membership

Section 1 - Composition and Mode of Selection

a. An elected delegate from each school advisory council in Area H.

b. Elected student delegates.

A student from each high school and a student from each junior high school for a total of eight, selected by their student bodies.

c. Area H elementary, junion high, and high school groups shall each select two teachers for a total of six.

d. One principal shall be selected from each senior high school cluster.

Section 2 - Alternate

There shall be an alternate for each delegate who shall function in the absence of the delegate. It is the responsibility of the delegate to inform his alternate if he is unable to attend any meeting.

Article IV Voting Rights, Membership

1. Each member shall be entitled to one vote and may cast that vote on each matter submitted to a vote of the Council. Proxy voting and absentee ballots shall not be permitted.

2. A member shall no longer hold membership should he cease to reside or work in the area or otherwise terminate his relationship with the group which he was selected to represent.

3. Membership is not transferable or assignable.

4. Any member may resign by filing a written resignation.

5. Individual Councils and groups will inform in writing the Area H Council of the names of its delegate and alternate.

6. Members of the Council shall serve terms as designated by the electing or selecting group.

7. Excessive absenteeism of a delegate shall be reported to his group by the secretary.

Article V Vacancies

Any vacancy on the Council shall be filled by the appointing, electing, or selecting group who shall notify the Area H Council in writing.

Article VI Officers

The Officers of the Council shall consist of a President, Vice President, Recording Secretary, and Corresponding Secretary. These officers shall be elected by the Council, and shall serve for a term of one year, January to December. The election of Area H Advisory Council officers shall be in December.

Article VII Duties of Officers

The President shall preside at all meetings of the Council and shall be a member ex-officio of all committees, shall appoint special committees, and shall perform all other duties pertaining to his office.

The Vice President shall act as an aid to the President and shall perform other duties as delegated.

The Corresponding Secretary shall handle the Council correspondence, notify members of meetings, mail and agenda, and perform other duties as delegated.

Article VIII Committees

Such committees shall be created as may be required to promote the objectives of the Council. Said committees may be created by the Council or appointed by the President. The actions or recommendations of said committees are subject to the approval of the Council.

Members of the Council have the right to volunteer and serve on any of the committees.

A non-delegate community person may serve on a committee.

The Executive Board shall act on behalf of the Council between Council meetings, and said actions shall be reported to the Council.

The elected officers shall constitute the Executive Committee. The elected officers and the committee chairpeople shall constitute the Executive Board.

The Executive Committee, Executive Board, and standing committees may meet monthly and during school vacation periods.

Article IX Public Participation

Section 1

Members of the public may speak at any Council meeting by consent of the chair. Said consent may be revoked by a vote of a majority of the Council.

Section 2

Members of Area H community may serve on any of the committees.

Article X Meetings

Section 1

A minimum of four regular Council meetings shall be held during the school year. The date, time, and place shall be decided by the Council.

Section 2

Special meetings may be called by the Council President or by a quorum of the Council members. Written notices shall be sent to all delegates.

Section 3

Notification of all regular meetings shall be duly publicized not less than one week prior to the meetings.

Section 4

All regular and special meetings shall be open to the public.

Section 5

A quorum shall consist of one-third of the recognized membership.

Article XI Parliamentary Authority

Robert's Rules of Order (latest revision) shall govern the Council in all cases in which they are not in conflict with these bylaws.

Article XII Amendments

These bylaws may be amended at any regular meeting of the Council by two-thirds of those present, provided such amendments are submitted by mail to the membership one week prior to the meeting.

Article XIII Ratification

These bylaws were adopted at a special meeting on June 14, 1972.

APPENDIX B

OBJECTIVES OF PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

NOTE: This is a summary of a Chapter from Effective Public Participation in Federal Water Resource Planning, by Dr. James R. Hanchey, Institute for Water Resources, U.S. Corp of Engineers.

Despite the increased attention given to public participation in planning by federal natural resources agencies, it has often been difficult to develop programs or measure their effectiveness in the absence of a clear definition of what is expected by involving the public.

There are three major objectives for public participation, which are in turn broken down into second-order objectives, namely:

I. The Public Relations Objective: In order for the planning agency to develop plans which have broad public support and acceptance, the public must view the agency's role in the planning process as legitimate, and must have trust and confidence in the agency and its planning procedures.

A. Legitimizing the Agency's Role in the Planning Process

Agencies operate under limited authorities and this often leads to disparity between the capability of the agency to satisfy the public's needs and the expectations of the public. This disparity can result in a loss of legitimacy for the agency unless the constraints under which it operates are fully understood by the public. One of the initial tasks of a planning study is to inform the public about the agencies' authorities, responsibilities, operating procedures, and constraints. But the agency will still not have legitimacy if the public does not accept these limitations as legitimate. In such a case the agency must be prepared to modify the procedures and constraints over which it has control, and to urge and support changes in their authority and responsibility which require action by others.

B. Development of Confidence and Trust

An individual's willingness to accept a conclusion offered by someone else depends on two things: 1) the extent to which the other person is perceived as a source of valid information (confidence); 2) the degree to which the other person is seen as having an honest intent to share all the known valid information (trust). In the absence confidence and trust, communication between an agency and the public can break down.

It is not sufficient that the agency actually posses expertise and objectivity; the public must be convinced of this as well. On the other hand, when an agency attempts to create this "image" through public participation without being genuine, large segments of the public will sense this lack of genuineness and will oppose alternatives favored by the agency that in and of themselves may be sound. The image must match the reality.

II. Information Objective: This objective is to determine the problems to be solved and identify the solutions acceptable to the public.

A. Diagnosis of Community Problems and Needs

Often the planner sees him/herself, because of professional training, to be uniquely qualified to identify community needs. Studies indicate that many planners view the public as lacking in technical know-how, unaware of many of the issues involved in planning, lacking in objectivity, and extremely parochial. The public often views the planner as a narrow specialist with no appreciation for social values. Public participation provides the planner with the opportunity to test self-perceptions of needs by comparing them with information from the public prior to beginning the search for possible solutions.

B. Development of Alternative Solutions

The advantages of involving the public in the development of alternative solutions are three-fold: 1) the planner can identify the range of socially and politically feasible alternatives before becoming committed to a particular outcome; 2) the public may be a source of viable alternatives if allowed the opportunity to present them; 3) in the process of developing alternatives the public also develops a commitment to change, and are less resistant to new proposals.

C. Evaluation of the Implications of Solutions

One of the major purposes of involving the public in planning is to produce plans which are generally consistent with the values of the various publics. In order to do this the planner must develop alternative solutions embodying quite different values so the public can get a feel for the implications of different values. The planner plays a major role in identifying the implications of the alternatives, but the publics, because of their familiarity with their individual problems, may also play a role in forecasting consequences.

III. Conflict Resolution Objective: Conflicts between publics participating in a planning study are bound to occur due to differences in interests, values, opinions, beliefs, or scarcity of some resource. Whether this conflict occurs in a cooperative or a competitive context will be strongly influenced by the processes of conflict resolution employed by the planner.

A. Consensus Seeking

Consensus seeking can be described as cooperative problem-solving in which the conflicting parties have the joint interest of reaching a mutually satisfactory solution. The advantages are:

1) It aids open and honest communication of relevant information between the participants.

2) It encourages the recognition of the legitimacy of the other party's interests and of the necessity for searching for a solution which is responsive to the needs of each side.

3) It leads to a trusting, friendly atmosphere which increases sensitivity to similarities and common interests, while minimizing the significance of differences.

Factors which influence the cooperative or competitive process include:

1) Openness and a sharing of authority and information on the part of the planner leading to a cooperative or a competitive process. Coercion, threat, deception lead to a competitive orientation.

2) Prior successful experience at cooperative relationships enhance the possibility of cooperativeness.

3) The agency can be a major influence in limiting controversy and guiding the conflicting parties toward a mutually acceptable solution by adopting the position of an impartial arbiter and by providing opportunities for interaction between groups.

B. Avoidance of Extreme Positions

A competitive process is likely to occur when issues are perceived to have only two positions, for or against, win or lose. A competitive process stimulates the view that the solution of the conflict can only be of the type imposed by one side or the other by superior force, deception, or cleverness. Enhancing one's own power then becomes more significant than resolving the conflict.

The competitive process is most likely to occur when there is a misjudgment or misperception on the part of one or more parties. The planner can minimize miscommunication or misperception by maintaining reasonable full communication between opposing interests and by searching out and making use of common values and common interests which serve as a basis for the formation of cooperative bonds.

A competitive atmosphere is also created if one side perceives the other as inflexible in its position. The planner should therefore avoid presenting issues to the public in a manner such that the agency's position is perceived as too rigid. This is likely to occur when only one plan is presented to the public for consideration. Referring to agency constraints also makes the agency appear inflexible; it is helpful if the planner has acquainted the public with these constraints early in the planning process.

In designing a public participation program a planner should be guided by two principles: 1) the objectives of involving the public in the study should be clearly spelled out, and 2) the techniques used should be designed to meet these objectives.

IV. LEVELS OF PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Level of Involvement	Example	Communication To Public
The purpose is to have the public		
1. Be aware of	Here is a map and management plan of the Blue Bonnet Wilderness area that the Forest Service will develop and manage as wilderness.	The decision has been made. We want you to be aware of it.

Level of Involvement	Example	Communication To Public
2. Accept ..... (and understand its affect)	Here is an area proposed for the Blue Bonnet Wilderness. There will be fishing, hiking, camping, wildflower smelling, mountain climbing, and solitude. We want to manage this area so it will provide many kinds of wilderness experiences for you.	The decision has been made. We want to make it easy for you to accept it. We also want you to understand how it affects you.
3. React to	Here is a map and proposed management plan of the Blue Bonnet wilderness area. We want to know your reaction to the boundaries of the area, and our proposal for managing it as wilderness.	The decision may or may not have been made. Your reaction will be considered in the final plans.
4. Become involved in ..... (advisory position with many constraints)	Here is a map of the Blue Bonnet area. With this list of wilderness criteria and information about the resources there, we want you to help us decide on the boundaries, and help us make recommendations about appropriate developments in the wilderness area.	The decision has not been made. We want you to help us make the decision, given certain criteria and constraints.
5. Become involved in ..... (advisory position with few constraints)	This map shows an area of undeveloped land with a variety of resources. Will you help us determine what the best uses are, and the forms of management that should be for that area.	The decision has not been made. We want you to help us make the decision. There are few constraints.

Materials developed by Ernest McDonald, U.S. Forest Service